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K-12 Contact Tracing Guidance from the Wyoming Department of Health

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The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) recommends that Wyoming K-12 Schools follow the contact tracing guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help prevent transmission of COVID-19 in the school setting. Contact tracing identifies individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 so they can be excluded from school during the period when they may become infectious to others. This guidance document summarizes the CDC recommendations. The complete CDC recommendations for COVID-19 prevention in schools can be found here:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-guidance.html>.

WDH has provided template directive letters that School Districts can use to notify parents that their children have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed to COVID-19 as well as when those students can return to school. These template letters have been distributed to Superintendents and Trustees.

Individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19

Staff or students who have tested positive for COVID-19 need to remain home from school until they meet all of the following criteria:

- The individual has not had a fever (without the use of fever-reducing medication) for at least 24 hours
- Other symptoms are improving
- It has been at least 10 days since symptoms first started.

If the individual did not have symptoms, he or she should stay home from school until 10 days have passed since the positive test was collected.

To calculate the length of time an individual diagnosed with COVID-19 must stay home from school, add 10 days to the date that symptoms started (or the date the positive test was collected if there are no symptoms). For example, if symptoms started on October 1, the individual must stay home through October 11 and can return to school on October 12 if he or she meets the criteria above.

Further information on determining the length of time an individual with COVID-19 must remain out of school can be found here:

Close Contacts of Infectious Individuals

Individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 are infectious beginning 48 hours prior to the onset of symptoms and until they meet the criteria to return to school. If an individual does not have symptoms, they are infectious beginning 48 hours prior to the test collection.

An individual is considered a close contact if they were within 6 feet of the infectious individual for 15 minutes or more during the course of a 24-hour period.

There are several circumstances in which an individual with an exposure to an infectious individual **does not** need to stay home from school:

- Both the infectious individual and the person exposed were wearing masks at the time of exposure.
- The person exposed is fully vaccinated against COVID-19. An individual is considered fully vaccinated if it has been at least two weeks since they completed their vaccine series (two doses for Pfizer and Moderna or one dose for Johnson & Johnson (Janssen)).
- The person exposed tested positive for COVID-19 using a molecular or antigen test performed by a provider or laboratory during the three months prior to exposure.
- The person exposed tested positive on a COVID-19 antibody test (IgG, IgM, or total antibodies) during the three months prior to exposure. This antibody option should be used for low risk situations only and may not be an option if the individual may have close contact with individuals in the school setting who are at high risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19.

All other individuals identified as close contacts should stay home from school until they are no longer at risk of becoming infectious to others.

The most protective length of time that close contacts should stay home from school is 14 days after the exposure. However, CDC has published three options for reducing the length of time that individuals need to stay home following exposure to COVID-19. These options include:

- Returning to school **after** 10 days if symptoms are monitored daily and the individual does not develop **any** symptoms
- Returning to school **after** 7 days if symptoms are monitored daily, the individual does not develop **any** symptoms **AND** the individual has a negative molecular test collected on day 5 or later. While a molecular test is preferred, if an antigen test is the only option, it can also be used.
- Returning to school if the exposed individual tests positive on a COVID-19 antibody test (IgG, IgM, total antibody) immediately following exposure. This option should be used for low risk situations only. This antibody option should be used for low risk situations only and may not be an option if the individual may

have close contact with individuals in the school setting who are at high risk of developing severe illness from COVID-19.

To calculate the length of time a close contact exposed to COVID-19 must stay home from school, add the number of days the individual will stay home (based on the CDC options above) to the date of last exposure. For example, if the last exposure was October 1, the individual can return to school on the following dates based on the option chosen:

- 14 days: Last day at home is October 15, return to school on October 16
- 10 days: Last day at home is October 11, return to school on October 12
- 7 days: Test on October 6 or later, last day at home is October 8, return to school on October 9

Further information on determining the length of time an individual with a close contact exposure to COVID-19 must remain out of school can be found here:

https://health.wyo.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/When-to-start-and-end-quarantine_DRAFT.pdf

There are certain circumstances in which it can be difficult to determine precisely whether there are exposures within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes, such as during athletic competitions. Local public health offices and WDH are available to consult in such situations as necessary. WDH may recommend symptom monitoring rather than exclusion from school in such situations. In general, entire classrooms or teams do not need to stay home unless it is likely that the infectious person had close contact with the entire classroom or team.

Additional Resources

Additional guidance documents and contact information can be found here:

<https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-orders-and-guidance/>